

perfect for each other by Val-Creative

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Summary: In which Alexei lives a long and happy life and ends up having a great time at Hawkins's Fun Faire with his new friend and crush.

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Murray hasn't been out of his hideout in ages.

And, in all sincerity, he's not a fan of loud noises and bright lights and crowds.

Alexei doesn't seem to be bothered by a single thing happening, playing his fishing pole game surrounded by little kids. It results in him winning a smaller Woody Woodpecker stuffed toy. He glances over his shoulder to Murray's direction, a burnt corndog dangling in his mouth, offering an enthusiastic wave. A skinny little Soviet scientist who grins widely like a child. Nothing *scum-like* about him.

Catches of neon-orange and blue reflect in Alexei's oversized glasses. Murray gets distracted for a moment, his lips smacking unconsciously, and then mirrors Alexei's grin as the other, sweat-stained man rushes over, laughing.

"*Another*," Alexei babbles in English, pointing to the larger Woody Woodpecker cradled in Murray's arms. "*Friend*."

Murray's expression softens.

"*Yes, he does have a friend*," he answers in clear and accented Russian.

The prizes get passed to Alexei once they start walking again. Most of them are eventually discarded and forgotten. Murray notices that Alexei ignores the drop tower and bumper cars, and every single fair ride, up until they reach one section. The workers hired by Mayor Kline took the time to utilize a nearby empty lot, constructing a water-filled tunnel system. Two passengers for each boat, cruising slowly through the darkness.

Alexei stares in complete fascination at the bold, heart-covered sign. "*Do we get on?*" he asks.

"Oh, um," Murray fumbles for an explanation in Alexei's tongue. Oh boy. "No, no. *That's for couples. Romantic partners.*" His hand motions to the wooden fence separating the people waiting their turn. "*Even if we did, everyone is paired off randomly.*"

He hates the disappointment lingering on Alexei's face, and Murray makes a reluctant sigh, tugging his sleeve.

"*We can go on the Ferris Wheel—how about that?*"

There's no glimpse of Joyce or Chief Hopper anywhere. They must have found their kids.

It won't be a problem if him and Alexei go off on their own. For a little while longer. Murray half-expects Alexei to be nervous going up on the Ferris Wheel, but it's the same wonderstruck look in Alexei's eye as they hover up in the car, rocking steadily. Murray, however, can do without this.

"*Are you alright?*"

"*Not really,*" Murray huffs out, avoiding the other man's troubled gaze. He whines in helplessness as Alexei curiously shifts the weight of their car, Murray's hands bracing to the safety bar. "*I could use some good vodka right now... or a distraction...*"

It's like a blackout.

Only a second.

Murray discovers that it's his eyelids flutter together when Alexei tilts his own head, pressing his mouth over Murray's lips, quietly, urgently. He hasn't had any physical affection in years either. Romantic partners. Bothersome. *Distractions.* Murray supposes he asked for this, gaping and blinking rapidly.

"*What was that?*"

Murray forgets to use the Russian language, but somehow Alexei gets it. "*You said you wanted a distraction,*" Alexei tells him.

"*That's not—*"

A flustered, tense laugh escapes Murray despite himself. He can't even be mad at Alexei. Not that it had been a terrible kiss. Oh no, Alexei might smell like dirt and BO, but there's a sweet tinge of strawberry slushie flavor on him.

"*Next time, ask me before you do that,*" Murray says in Russian, smiling at a gleeful Alexei, mock-scolding. "*We're in public.*"

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Stranger Things isn't mine. Requested by molly (AO3): "Alexei/Murray, Alexei lives." Thanks for this! Love them! And any thoughts/comments appreciated!